

A manifesto for socialist development in the 21st Century

Article (Published Version)

Selwyn, Benjamin (2018) A manifesto for socialist development in the 21st Century. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 53 (36). pp. 47-55. ISSN 0012-9976

This version is available from Sussex Research Online: <http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/id/eprint/78868/>

This document is made available in accordance with publisher policies and may differ from the published version or from the version of record. If you wish to cite this item you are advised to consult the publisher's version. Please see the URL above for details on accessing the published version.

Copyright and reuse:

Sussex Research Online is a digital repository of the research output of the University.

Copyright and all moral rights to the version of the paper presented here belong to the individual author(s) and/or other copyright owners. To the extent reasonable and practicable, the material made available in SRO has been checked for eligibility before being made available.

Copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided that the authors, title and full bibliographic details are credited, a hyperlink and/or URL is given for the original metadata page and the content is not changed in any way.

A Manifesto for Socialist Development in the 21st Century

BENJAMIN SELWYN

What might socialist development look like? Mainstream conceptions of development deem capital accumulation the bedrock upon which to achieve human development. In these conceptions of change, labouring classes are regarded as fuel for the development motor, which in turn justifies their exploitation and oppression. In contrast, how would a non-exploitative socialist development strategy be operationalised? This article advances a 10-point plan for sustainable socialist transformation.

In early 2017, it was revealed that eight men owned as much wealth as half the world's population (Oxfam 2017). This is in a world where, according to the most conservative figures, around one in three workers live in poverty. More realistic calculations show that the majority of the world's population suffers from poverty of one form or another.¹ These inequalities and deprivations are only one symptom of capitalist development. Others include environmental destruction, systematic racism and gender discrimination, each of which generate their own poverty burdens.

Whether in Augusto Pinochet's Chile (the laboratory for free-market development) or in Park Chung-hee's South Korea (the most celebrated case of state-led development), capitalist development is founded upon the exploitation and political oppression of labour.² Moreover, capitalist development is predicated upon environmental ruin and the (re)production of various forms of discrimination.

Theories of capitalist development are united by a common conception of labour as a resource, or as an input into the development process. This is equally the case for the self-stated free-market followers of Adam Smith as it is for the statist followers of Friedrich List (Selwyn 2014, 2017). Such theories are united in viewing the world through the lens of capital, and they perform a major ideological role in fortifying capitalist development by encouraging the world's poor to do so.

Such capital-centred development perspectives reproduce themselves in at least four ways: (i) they identify capital accumulation as the basis for the development of the poor; (ii) they identify elites (corporations and/or states) as drivers of capital accumulation; (iii) myriad actions, movements and struggles by the poor are disregarded (that is, not considered developmental), and are often considered to be hindrances to development; and (iv) as a consequence of point (iii), elite repression and exploitation of the poor is legitimised, especially when the latter contest capital-centred development.

Is it possible to think of human development as a process that, rather than deepening capitalist exploitation, is based upon its transcendence? What might such an alternative, socialist, development strategy and agenda look like? Could it also solve problems of environmental destruction and overcome various forms of discrimination? This article's aim is to contribute to such a conversation. It does so on the basis of a thought experiment.

Imagine that, in the near future, a labouring class movement, with support from a small farmer/peasant sector, conquers

Parts of this article have been published previously in *Monthly Review Online*.

I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer for suggestions for improving this article. All errors remain my own.

Benjamin Selwyn (*B.Selwyn@sussex.ac.uk*) is professor of International Development, University of Sussex, UK.

political and economic power in a poor country. This conquest occurs through a combination of parliamentary victories and mass, extra-parliamentary social struggles. Once such a conquest of power has been achieved, how might the previously capitalist political economy be transformed into a labouring class political economy? What kind of institutions might be established to channel, preserve and expand labouring class power? Where would the resources come from to pursue socialist development in a poor country? And what would socialist development policies look like?

This article argues that we need to think about socialist development strategies as *beginning* in a single state, one that exists within a capitalist geo-economic world system. A socialist development strategy in a poor state must contribute to (i) immediately ameliorating the conditions of the labouring classes within that state; (ii) establishing the foundations for the (re)production and expansion of labouring class power through a newly established state; and (iii) increasing the possibilities for other socialist states to emerge, and collaborate within (but ultimately beyond) the capitalist world system.

This article also argues that the material resources to ameliorate the conditions of labouring classes already exist in poor countries. It is often argued, even within socialist circles, that for socialist development to occur, a strong (capitalist) economic base must first be established. Such arguments are erroneous in strategy and in analysis. Strategically, they legitimate expanded capital accumulation and the continued subjection of labour to capital. Analytically, they fail to recognise the very significant amounts of already established wealth generated in poor countries.

The core issue here is not, therefore, the generation of more wealth upon which to found future socialist societies. It is, rather, the use of already existing wealth to ensure real human development for labouring classes. It is not wealth *per se*, but the *social relations* within and through which the wealth is generated and distributed that determines the feasibility of socialist development.

What follows advances a vision of development that can be thought of as a minimum utopia—"a form of society which could generally provide for its members the material and social bases of a ... contented existence ... from which the gravest social and political evils familiar to us have been removed" (Geras 1999: 44). As will be argued—from the possibilities of widespread wealth redistribution to the 10-point plan for socialist transformation—such a society can be constructed using already existing resources and practices. The key, however, is to deploy them in the context of, and contributing to, new and evolving social relations. The utopian elements in this article are not the policies, tools or practices necessary to generate the social basis for a contented existence. Rather, it is the prospect of new, non-capitalist social relations, within and through which such measures will be pursued. Given the myriad social relations that have existed throughout and across humanity, it seems worthy to consider the merits of attempting to construct new ones, if they appear more likely to contribute to the establishment of such a contented society.

Intermittent Revolution³

The initial conquest of political power by labouring classes will not mean the transcendence of capitalism. Rather, it will represent a new, heightened, phase of the struggle for a transition to an alternative mode of production. It will be undertaken using tools inherited from the past:

It must be kept in mind that the new forces of production and relations of production do not develop out of nothing, nor drop from the sky, nor from the womb of the self-positing Idea; but from within an antithesis to the existing development of production and the inherited, traditional relations of property. (Marx 1993: 278)

There will be numerous firms where capital-labour relations still exist. Large numbers of unemployed workers will be seeking work and incomes. Households will still, in all probability, be women-led, dependent upon work-based incomes, and orientated towards (re)producing current and future generations of workers. The majority of land will probably be held by a small minority of capitalist farmers and/or land-owners. Foreign trade will occur on capitalist terms. Financial institutions and their power within the economy will remain highly concentrated. Gender, racial and ethnic discriminations will continue to exist. Democratic institutions will be dysfunctional from the perspective of establishing a genuinely participatory society.

Under such circumstances, the policies and strategies of an emergent socialist state need to simultaneously expand and enhance the dynamism of labouring class power, whilst reducing the power of capital. Much time will be required to subordinate capitalist social relations to socialist relations. Precisely because of this drawn-out, contradiction-laden process, it is doubly necessary to consider how an emerging labouring class state can maintain the initial enthusiasm and energy of the classes that have created it, facilitate their enhanced social reproduction, and contribute, *at an unknown time in the future*, to the global expansion of socialist human development.

The process of enhancing labouring class power can be conceptualised as an intermittent revolution (Tugal 2016). Such transformations will occur over the short, medium and long term, and will take many forms, including the construction of: alternative institutions (cooperatives and communes); alternative means of securing and expanding the means of survival (the production and distribution of food and other basic needs); new systems of participatory education, and the medium and longer-term accumulation of political experience (of defending and extending labouring class power). An outward-looking foreign policy can complement the domestic extension of labouring class power, through collaborating with international social movements to construct solidarity for the new regime (and crucially, to defend it from hostile intervention) and, when opportunities arise, to extend the process internationally of labouring class power.

The initial emergence and establishment of a democratic labouring class state in one country is the precondition for the emergence of other such states. And, the advent of the latter is necessary in order to preserve the gains of the former over the long run. In all likelihood, there will be a significant time lag

between the emergence of the first such state, and its global multiplication. It is within this time lag that a socialist development strategy must be formulated and pursued.

Reabsorption of the State by Society⁴

After studying the Paris Commune, Karl Marx argued that it was “the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economical emancipation of labour,” as it would “serve as a lever for uprooting the economical foundations upon which rests the existence of classes, and therefore of class rule” (Marx 1966 [1871]). He characterised the radical process of changing social relations, and in particular of the relation of state to society as

[T]he reabsorption of the state power by society as its own living forces instead of as forces controlling and subduing it, by the popular masses themselves, forming their own force instead of the organised force of their suppression—the political form of their social emancipation. (Marx 1966 [1871])

Societal reabsorption of the state is required to subordinate and transform capitalist social relations. Three organisational principles can contribute to thinking through how such a transformative process might occur (Lebowitz 2015).

Social ownership of the means of production: Capitalist “[c]ommodity production has been the social form under which the most completely developed system of social interdependence in human history has been achieved” (Barker 1998: 3). However, the means of production are directed autocratically, in accordance with market imperatives of competitive capital accumulation. Such ownership structures deprive workers of any say over how and to what end production is orientated and reduces them to “objects” to be manipulated by managerial “subjects.” Social ownership of the means of production, by contrast, would reconstitute decision-making as a collective democratic process.

Labour-led social production: The *social ownership* of the means of production facilitates the *social direction* of production through worker–community cooperation. Such cooperation is an essential property of an emergent socialist society for two reasons. First, because it limits, reduces and eventually eliminates production based on autocratic and anarchic competition. Second, because the lifeblood of socialist development is cooperation (within and beyond workplaces).

Identification and satisfaction of communal needs and purposes: Under capitalism rival firms vie to secure competitive advantage. Labouring class households and individual members compete against each other to secure the best jobs. Communal-based organisations, organised within and beyond workplaces represent an alternative logic of social reproduction. The identification and satisfaction of communal needs and purposes will be predicated upon cooperation within and between workplaces and communities.

How might these organisational principles be put into practice? A process of decentralised, local-level participatory planning

represents one possible method (Harnecker 2014). Under such a system, the social energy generated by planning (drawing up and enacting a plan) flows upwards—from the local to the national level—rather than only downwards by firms and states, as under capitalism. A principle informing such a process is that “everything that can be done at the lower level should be decentralised to this level” (Harnecker 2014). The national economy will be reorganised towards achieving these objectives. Needs and objectives that cannot be met at the local level will be transmitted upwards, to higher planning bodies, which can be incorporated into more general resource generation and allocation strategies.

The establishment and transmission upwards of democratic planning impulses require appropriate scales of participatory planning. Such different but interdependent scales can be constituted by neighbourhood communities, communes, city/municipality councils and national state bodies (Lebowitz 2015).

Within a neighbourhood community, neighbours can meet regularly to discuss with each other what kind of community they want to live in, and then to identify and coordinate the communities’ needs and capabilities of fulfilling those needs. The likelihood of a precise match between community needs and the ability to fulfil those needs is small. The purpose of local-level planning is, in part, therefore, to identify and communicate upwards what additional resources are required and what surplus capacities are available.

The commune represents the next scale of decentralised participatory planning. It combines various neighbourhoods and workplaces. Information from the communities is assembled and discussed within workplaces. Can workers satisfy the needs of the communities which comprise the commune? Under capitalism, where production is orientation towards the generation of exchange values (for profitable sale onto markets) such considerations are secondary (if at all) to those of profit-maximisation. Under an emergent socialist society, the identification of, and attempts to meet, local needs begins the process of substituting use values (goods produced to satisfy labouring class needs) for exchange values. Through communal meetings the councils can generate data on:

(i) Needs that can be and are satisfied by and within the community and commune; (ii) needs that cannot be satisfied by the community (which need further assistance from the commune and beyond); (iii) workplaces’ surplus capacity (that can contribute to meeting needs of other communities and communes).

Surplus capacity and unmet needs are communicated further up the participatory planning chain to larger-scale units—from *communal cities* to the *national state*. As communes draw up their list of needs, their (in)abilities to meet them and their surplus capacities, the national-level state commune can assess how to generate and allocate resources. Where there are excess needs, discussions will revolve around mechanisms to increase output, the (regional or social) reallocation of resources, and/or possibilities for reducing the satisfaction of some needs.

Through decentralised participatory planning participants attain knowledge about resource availability, production and allocation. In her distillation of the experiences of decentralised participatory planning in Brazil, Venezuela and India, Marta Harneker (2014) writes how it represents a double process:

[F]irst ... the plan, which has been elaborated in a participatory manner; and a second ... the transformation of people through their practice ... [It] is an educational process in which those that participate learn to enquire about the causes of things, to respect the opinion of others, to understand that the problems they face are not exclusive to their street or neighbourhood but are related to the overall situation of the economy, the national social situation, and even the international situation ... Through this, new relations of solidarity and complementarity are created that place the emphasis on the collective rather than the individual.

Decentralised participatory planning will require some central coordination, and ultimately the power to determine resource allocation. Its extent cannot be determined in the abstract, and would depend on considerations ranging from variations in different communes' abilities to meet their needs, to changing global circumstances.

Reclaiming Social Wealth

The core argument in this section is that the redistribution of wealth through the transformation of social relations represents the fastest means to alleviate poverty, and, in so doing, establishes genuinely progressive possibilities and processes of human development. It is often objected that while such redistribution would contribute to meaningful human development in already-wealthy countries (where the pie to be redistributed is relatively large), it is unlikely to do so in relatively poor countries. These countries, rather, need to accumulate wealth prior to redistributing it, and consequently, they must undergo a process of rapid capitalist development. Non-capitalist development is thus precluded for one, or many, generations.

Such arguments often take for granted, or simply ignore, ways in which capitalist classes in poor countries are able to accumulate wealth, often offshore, and shield it from national taxation and potentially democratically determined use. For example, a recent study by Ndikumana and Boyce (2011) show how:

[S]ub-Saharan Africa experienced an exodus of more than \$700 billion in capital flight since 1970 ... Africa is a net creditor to the rest of the world in the sense that its foreign assets exceed its foreign liabilities. But there is a key difference between the two: the assets are in the hands of private Africans, while the liabilities are public, owed by the African people at large through their governments.

This is compared to Africa's \$177 billion in external debts (Ndikumana and Boyce 2011). James S Henry (2012); Shaxson et al (2012); Boyce (2011) provides data for 139 "mostly low-middle income countries" and notes that

[T]raditional data shows aggregate external debts of \$4.1 trillion at the end of 2010. But take their foreign reserves and unrecorded offshore private wealth into account, and the picture reverses: they had aggregate net debts of *minus* \$10.1-13.1 trillion ... [T]hese countries are big net creditors, not debtors. [However], their assets are held by a few wealthy individuals, while their debts are shouldered by their ordinary people through their governments.⁵

Deborah Rogers and Bálint Balázs (2016) demonstrate that in very poor countries, a relatively small distribution of wealth from rich to poor could eliminate poverty:

Using numbers which approximate those of Bangladesh in 1995–96, a redistribution of 3% of the income from the top quintile (reduced from 40.2% to 37.2%) to the bottom quintile (raised from 9.3% to 12.3%) results in a reduction in extreme poverty from 20% to 0%.

They continue:

Attempting to reduce poverty by a similar amount through growth of the economy requires an expansion of total income of approximately 45%. (Rogers and Balázs 2016: 62)

In a similar vein, Chris Hoy and Andy Sumner show how very limited wealth redistribution (through, for example, redirection of fuel subsidies away from their relatively well-off beneficiaries to the poor) can have significant effects: "most developing countries have the financial capacity to end poverty at the ... \$1.90, or a slightly higher line of \$2.50 and potentially \$5 a day (Hoy and Sumner 2016: 3).

In these calculations, a rather conservative (money-based) definitions of poverty are used. Moreover, these calculations presume limited wealth redistribution *within* the still-existing capitalist social structures.

Our conception of socialist development entails a broader, social, conception of wealth. It includes not just income and money, but the means of producing social wealth itself—from land and workplaces, to the natural environment. Under capitalism, this wealth is socially produced but privately owned. Our objectives are to transform, radically, the production of society's wealth through socialising its ownership and its democratic direction.

The distribution of money wealth represents a necessary first step to eliminating poverty. However, such measures have their limits as wealth distribution requires its prior production. How might a socialist organisation and distribution of the production of social wealth contribute to further improving the conditions of a poor country's population?

A 10-Point Plan

The following discussion comprises a 10-point plan for socialist development. Before going any further, it should be stated, with 100% clarity, that every case of socialist development will be different, depending on resource base (including poverty levels), the particular constitution (including political alliances) of labouring class power, and crucially, whether they are earlier or later developers (with the latter probably finding themselves in a more favourable international situation due to assistance from earlier socialist developers).

While each form of socialist development will be historically, geographically and socially specific, given the global extent of capitalism they will confront similar challenges. The power of capital will have to be dismantled, albeit in ways that do not destroy society. The challenge will be to use what is available (inherited from the capitalist past) to construct something new (a socialist future).

Many of the proposals suggested below are, in the absence of broader social transformation, compatible with capitalism.

Some of them have been implemented already. If these policies are compatible with contemporary capitalist development, then why and how could they contribute to socialist development? Whether a policy contributes to capitalist or socialist development depends upon the social relations within which it occurs and the objectives which it serves. Policies can help engender socialist development if they contribute to the radical transformation of social relations. Progressive policies in the absence of social transformation will leave capitalist power intact, ready and able to undermine labouring class gains.

Banks, Money and Economic Democracy

Money and private banks do not represent natural means and institutions for financial intermediation. On the contrary, they contribute directly to capitalism's growth dynamic, to class and regional differentiation, and to the concentration of capitalist power. Money and banks are social resources that can be held publicly or privately. They can serve either democratic or autocratic needs. The global financial system is not simply a mechanism through which money is allocated. Rather, it is a system of power which guarantees continued flows of global resources towards the Dollar-Wall Street Regime (Gowan 1999).

The first objective will be to cancel what we consider to be odious debts (debts incurred by the previous administration for the benefits of capitalist rather than labouring classes). We will introduce capital controls. Such controls, determined and implemented by a labouring class state will regulate the movement of capital in and out of the country, and are necessary for engendering socialist development strategies (Crotty and Epstein 1996). Such controls will regulate the export of money and finance (to prevent capital flight and subject domestic capital to domestic democratic imperatives). They will also serve to guide foreign investment towards socially dynamic and beneficial ventures, potentially in collaboration with local firms. As capital's exit options (which it uses to extract concessions from labour) are closed down, domestically generated resources which are still held in private hands will be invested domestically, under increasingly democratically determined conditions.

Under capitalism, banks effectively create money through loans (so-called "sight money") (Mellor 2005). These accounts require growth to repay interest (which are typically lower for those who already have accumulated large stocks of money and higher for those without money). Central banks and states enforce the power of private banks by regulating the money supply to ensure that workers can only obtain money through selling their labour power, through (interest-based) loans, or by very limited welfare provision.

Under capitalism scarcity is a consequence of class relations—of workers' lack of control over means of producing social wealth. An increasingly democratic society can begin to eliminate this scarcity by socialising finance—by integrating it into emergent cooperative structures, and by gradually replacing money derived from wages with a universal basic income/grant (Standing 2017).

Money will increasingly be conceptualised and function as a public resource, and as an instrument of socialist development

(Mellor 2012). A new accounting system—encompassing local- and national-level associations—will calculate (i) the population's basic and extended needs (ranging from food consumption to infrastructure development requirements), and (ii) the nation's available resources. Money will be distributed through state bank accounts to individuals and associations, in order to match societies' resources (from raw material to labour) with its democratically-determined requirements/needs.

Rather than the state relying on taxation to raise and invest money, money will be invested based on calculations of democratically determined need and resource availability. Where too much money is distributed (potentially leading to inflation), public taxation will be used to reduce the money supply. Remaining commercial banks will be transformed into intermediaries (between depositors and borrowers) and their operating costs will be met by user fees.

A Universal Basic Income

Capitalist exploitation occurs because labouring classes lack the resources (such as money and land) to sustain themselves, and are compelled to sell their labour power for wages. A universal basic income (UBI) can contribute to eliminating this compulsion, the construction of a solidarity-based political economy, and to the socialisation of reproductive labour. It will also, immediately, alleviate many forms of deprivation and poverty.

Cash transfers in poor countries have helped combat poverty. For example, in the 2000s cash transfer programmes in Malawi helped raise school attendance among girls by 40%, and in Namibia, they cut malnutrition (from 42% to 10%) and truancy (from 40% to almost 0%).

The UBIs are affordable even for states with initially limited budgets and large poor populations. Cutting and/or eliminating subsidies to firms that do not produce for the (democratically determined) social good, and to better-off sections of the population can fund such grants initially (Bardhan 2016).

The UBI will have one condition attached to it. Every able-bodied adult recipient will have a duty to carry out some unpaid household work within their communities to support and care for those who are unable to take care of themselves. Only those who already do so will be exempt from the condition. Existing wealth and resources will, through redistribution, generate the increasingly free public provision of caring activities (such as nurseries, old people's homes, communal dining facilities, and basic health facilities). The UBI will complement such caring arrangements and will contribute to the restructuring of gender-relations by socially recognising and distributing this work amongst the male population, and by reducing the amount of women's domestic reproductive work (Elson 1988).

Industrial Policy for a Green Transformation

The social ownership and direction of industry will contribute to establish socialist development. The radical socialist National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA)

argues that the most effective way to democratise the South African economy is by nationalising the lucrative mining sector. It draws on the 1955 Freedom Charter:

The people shall share in the country's wealth! The national wealth of our country, the heritage of South Africans, shall be restored to the people; the mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole; all other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people; all people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions. (SAHO 2011)

A socialist industrial policy aims to *shift* manufacturing away from exchange value (for profit) towards the production of use values (to serve workers' and the wider communities' needs). The transformation will be managed to maintain some foreign exchange earnings to purchase essential goods that cannot be produced locally. It will also aim to shift manufacturing away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy-based production through investments in the latter. Export-orientated industries will be run by workers' councils, integrated into decentralised planning organisations.

Our industrial policy will seek to generate an appropriate mix of high- and low-tech activities orientated towards the satisfaction of basic (and extended) needs. Large-scale investments will be orientated towards generating a national green-energy generation system—comprising a mix of small-scale solar technology and larger-scale wind turbines connected to a national grid.

Relatively low-tech industrial research and development (R&D) and expansion will focus on areas such as the production and widespread distribution of stove heaters (such as rocket stoves), ceramic water purifiers, solar-powered desalination devices, toilet systems, lighting (for example, gravity-powered lights), solar-heated showers, solar-powered light bulbs, pot-in-pot refrigeration systems, bike-powered water-pumps.

Higher-end technological shifts will include transforming auto-plants into factories producing bicycles, buses and trains; beauty products into health-orientated pharmaceuticals; advertising into popular education, and arms into domestic appliances.

Intersectoral articulation between industry and agriculture will raise productivity in agriculture and establish a dynamic, innovative and adaptive industrial sub-sector. Agricultural-industrial producer forums will be established to identify challenges and ways of meeting them, for example, through yield-enhancing investments in biotechnology.

The state will invest in establishing small-scale workshops in local communities; where possible these workshops will be fitted with 3D printers. Such investments will make possible the expansion of neighbourhood economies based on appropriate technologies. Community workshops would enable local-level production of many things that were previously only accessible through purchase. They would also serve as recycling centres, locations for surplus exchange, and information exchange (Trainer 1996). A shift away from fossil fuel-powered cars will be stimulated by the mass production and distribution of bicycles, and the construction of cycle paths throughout urban and rural spaces.

State investments in R&D will facilitate technology and knowledge transfers. These will be facilitated and encouraged by non-market forms of exchange, such as open-access and peer-to-peer relations (contemporary examples include Wikipedia, copyleft and various forms of open-sourced softwares).

Agrarian Reform

The global concentration of land is a product of imperialism, capitalist-market imperatives and state support for land-based capital (Akram-Lodhi 2015). This concentration and the prevailing export-orientated agro-industrial “model” of agriculture denies workers access to the land and underpins the existence and expansion of a surplus, unemployed, population. It is also a causal factor in the “paradox” of scarcity (lack of food for large segments of the worlds' poor) within abundance (global overproduction) (McMichael 1994).

The objectives of an agrarian reform are to (i) contribute to the achievement of national food security (where enough food is produced to satisfy the populations' needs), and (ii) to generate high-quality employment. In contrast to the prior examples of pro-capitalist agrarian reform, these objectives serve the goal of de-commodifying land, food and natural resources, and, in so doing, establishing a society where adequate food consumption becomes a real human right.

Such objectives and goals do exist within a system of constraints. In particular, export agriculture often generates foreign exchange for necessary imports that cannot yet be produced domestically. Like the industrial strategy, therefore, the proposals for agrarian reform are based on a conception of a mixed agrarian system. Immediate reforms will include the transformation of ownership of large export-orientated estates—from capitalist owners to workers' cooperatives. These cooperatives will, in conjunction with national objectives, combine export-production for foreign exchange with nationally orientated production for consumption.

The small-scale family farming sector will be preserved, but land would cease to be a (vendible) commodity. The universal basic income would provide social security for workers and family farmers (at times when they cannot produce). Common lands would be preserved and expanded.

The objective of achieving de-commodified food security, where food is a basic human right independent of purchasing power, will be sought through multilevel (from local communities to national state) investments to enhance sustainable, low-input agricultural productivity, and through low- and high-tech R&D. Low-tech R&D includes facilitating, building and conserving soil fertility, using biological controls for diseases, insects and weeds, intercropping, seed saving and selection, smaller-scale multiple harvesting cycles, and the integration of small-scale pasturing and grazing (Weis 2010: 334). High-tech R&D includes raising productivity through developing new plant varieties. As Kloppenburg (2010: 379) suggests, “[p]articipatory plant breeding offers a modality through which the labour power of millions of farmers can be synergistically combined with the skills of a much smaller set of plant breeders.”

Agrarian reform would extend into urban centres. Unused buildings can be transformed into greenhouses, flat roofs can be used as new growing spaces, unnecessary roads can be transformed into fields, allotments and parks, home gardening will be encouraged and facilitated through provision of inputs, technologies and permaculture education. As Ted Trainer (1996: 139) puts it

[m]ost of this urban space can ... be developed into permaculture forest-gardens, densely packed with mostly perennial plants so that settlements have permanent self-maintaining sources of food and many inputs for small craft producers.

Protecting and Learning from Indigenous Peoples

From “the discovery” of America in 1492 to contemporary globalisation, land-grabbing, dispossession of indigenous peoples and the despoliation of natural environments have underpinned capitalism’s geographical expansion (Clarke and Foster 2009). Indigenous peoples have, however, often been at the forefront of opposing capitalist expansion and depredation, and attempting alternative ways to live in conjunction with the natural environment. Joan Martinez-Alier (2003) refers to these struggles as the environmentalism of the poor. Whilst preserving their land and cultural rights, an emergent socialist state will also establish forums to share knowledge and practice between communities. The protection and preservation of indigenous people’s right to live according to their practices can potentially inform our conception of socialist development.

In parts of Latin America, the discourse and practice of *sumak kawsay* or *buen vivir* (living well) represents an alternative, potentially anti-capitalist conception of human development. It advocates “living in plenitude, knowing how to live in harmony with cycles of mother Earth, of the cosmos, of life and of history, and in balance with every form of existence in the state of permanent respect” (Mamani 2010: 32).

Foreign Policy

The foreign policy will be founded upon a dual approach. On the one hand, the guiding principle of external relations is non-aggression and the search for peaceful coexistence with capitalist powers. And on the other, we will establish links with social movements around the globe that strive to transform their societies. The assistance to these movements will consist of the demonstration effect. Information and practical knowledge about short-term successes will be disseminated and will assist social movements and interpret them in the context of longer-term social-transformative objectives.

There will be an attempt to participate in international debates about alternative development strategies, to promote experience, and explain its possibility and the extent of its applicability elsewhere. The objectives will be to (i) strengthen global transformative social movements to help them achieve their objectives, (ii) generate labouring class pressures upon progressive capitalist states (that is, states “governed” by progressive parties) to provide us with development

assistance, and (iii) to facilitate similar pressures from below to preclude interventions by hostile capitalist states designed to undermine transformative agenda.

The aim is to raise and promote the cause for a global living wage, form political alliances with movements, organisations and institutions as a means of maintaining pressure for this and related policies, and generating collaborative global networks.

It is also hoped that in the medium-long term other states will undergo a complementary process of social transformation, and these states will be integrated into a global social commonwealth, and knowledge and resources will be constructed and transferred between progressive states.

Economic Foreign Policy

As part of the economic foreign policy, there will be a demand that the international community generates a collective agenda to combat environmental destruction. The perspective will be adopted, in the first instance, from the Climate Justice Now! (CJN!) movement. (The latter was established as a counter-movement to the rich-world-dominated Kyoto Protocol and global environmental agenda of carbon trading, designed to legitimate continued fossil fuel-based industrial expansion.) The CJN! proposes the following, which we believe can contribute to a genuinely progressive global development:

(i) Leaving fossil fuels in the ground and investing instead in appropriate energy-efficiency and safe, clean and community-led renewable energy; (ii) radically reducing wasteful consumption, first and foremost in the north, but also by southern elites; (iii) huge financial transfers from north to south, based on the repayment of climate debts and subject to democratic control. The costs of adaptation and mitigation should be paid for by redirecting military budgets, innovative taxes and debt cancellation; and (iv) rights-based resource conservation that enforces indigenous land rights and promotes peoples’ sovereignty over energy, forests, land and water.⁶

The foreign economic policy will be based on the concept of a transitional period of socialist development in a sea of autocratic capitalism. We will, therefore, seek to continue to engage in trade in order to raise foreign exchange to fund the purchase of necessary imports. As noted in point (i) above, capital controls will facilitate a progressive as opposed to competitive integration into the world economy.

Development finance from progressive source will be attracted and trade unions, progressive municipalities and states (that is, those led and governed by left-wing forces), and seek to persuade them to invest funds (such as their pension funds) in activities that will further the transformative agenda.⁷

Once other states and regions begin to undertake progressive social transformation, the endeavour should be to generate close cooperative relations with them. Such relations will be determined by the human developmental needs and capacities of this emerging international collectivity (ALBA-TCP 2010).⁸

(i) Foreign trade and investment will be directed by domestic democratic bodies; (ii) special and different treatment: Nations

with greater developmental needs and lesser capacities will be granted preferential forms of access to the markets of nations that have greater developmental capacities; (iii) cooperation and solidarity as development cooperation: The collective struggle to raise populations' literacy and quality of health; (iv) establishment of a social emergency fund to assist emergent progressive nations transcend (the inevitable) transitional crises of contested reproduction; and (v) use of collective capacities to enhance our global negotiating positions in areas effecting our future development, including trade and investment rules and environmental and labour standards.

Sharing and Reducing Work

Capitalism is founded on a fundamental paradox. Technological advances have created a situation where only a tiny fraction of most societies' labour is required to fulfil its (basic and advanced) needs. However, private property, competitive capital accumulation and labour's exploitation by capital disable this potential. Proposals one to eight are designed to transform labouring class control over work through (i) transferring control over the means of production to labouring class organisations, and (ii) changing the content and meaning of work through democratisation.

Initial objectives are to establish full employment for those who can work through the spreading and sharing of work tasks. Longer-term objectives are to use the democratic control over, and social direction of, the means of production to reduce the working day. Through the identification of needs of individual communities and of the nation as a whole, it will become increasingly possible to identify wasteful and/or unnecessary activities and phase them out. Identification of necessary/socially desirable activities will contribute to the direction of our industrial policy. The R&D will be used to establish ways of increasing the efficiency and productivity of socially necessary/desirable activities with the objective of reducing the total working time required to create them.

Gender Equality, Nationalism and Racism

Attempts to generate socialist development will fail unless gender, ethnic and racial discrimination is overcome. In the endeavours to transcend these inequities, the Kurdish independence movement has inspired attempts to create a novel solidarity-based autonomous state in Rojava.

The Rojavan Kurds reject the nation state model which, since its foundation has been based on the "othering" of non-native ethnic minorities:

In Rojava, many different religious and ethnic groups—Christians, Yazidis, Arabs, Turkmens, Chechens, Armenians—live together with the large Kurdish majority. By officially and insistently denying the nation state, and by trying to create administrative structures that incorporate these different elements, the Rojava model gives to minorities a participatory role unprecedented in the Middle East—a role as equals in the management of the *polis*. (Aretaios 2015)

The Rojava autonomous region has established gender equality as an organising principle. Every institution and organisation has a 40% quota for representation of women,

40% for men and the remaining 20% for whichever sex receives the higher number of votes.

From the smallest local organisation to the parliament and government, this 40% quota is imposed and in many cases there is an obligation to have women as co-presidents or vice-presidents. (Aretaios 2015)

Culture as Development

Cultural production and participation under capitalism are based on a dual process of degradation (of indigenous and working class cultures), and then its repackaging and commodification for sale for profit. Under capitalism, culture is established as a separate sphere (of leisure activity) divorced from social reproductive activities. Through commodification culture becomes a mark of distinction and class differentiation (Bourdieu 1984), whereas prior to degradation/commodification, it represented a form of, and forum for (community) participation. Cultural development will fortify the social ownership and control of the means of production and the democratic identification of needs.

Cultural development will be facilitated, in part, through advanced education for all, based on a radical pedagogy of the oppressed and conscientisation. Conscientisation is

the process in which [wo]men, not as recipients, but as knowing subjects achieve a deepening awareness both of the sociocultural reality that shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality. (Freire 1972: 15)

This pedagogy will facilitate the transformation of developmental objects into developmental subjects.

State and local investments will support the integration of Conscientisation-based education into the functioning of community-level participatory planning. Indigenous, local, historical cultural traditions will be used to construct new educational traditions. These traditions will contribute to cultural renewal through the de-alienation, defragmentation, and reintegration of social life. New television, radio, print and digital media will be established in order to engender the dissemination of the indigenous and emergent labouring class culture.

Conclusions

Capitalism has established enough wealth on a global scale for a world free of poverty but it can never realise this potential. It is a system of endless competitive capital accumulation, exploitation, oppression, and environmental destruction. These social relations will more certainly wreck the planet, create new forms of mass poverty, and reproduce mega-inequalities than deliver the dream of well-being for all.

Mainstream theories of development may differ on the weight they allocate to markets and states in the development process. They concur, however, that labour exploitation (and repression) are necessary ingredients of capitalist development. In this way, they are based on a fundamental paradox—that while they proclaim their wish for the amelioration of the conditions of the world's poor, they do so by advancing theories and practices that legitimate and facilitate the exploitation of the world's poor.

Socialist approaches must be founded upon the recognition that labour exploitation is anathema to real human development. From this starting point, the question arises of how can a non-exploitative society be constructed? In this article, I have argued that constructing such a society will be tension-laden,

including the very significant difficulty of building a new society using tools from the past. Nevertheless, recognising this tension represents part of the mental preparation required for conceiving of the possibilities of socialist development in the 21st century.

NOTES

- 1 According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), in 2010 there were approximately 942 million working poor (almost one in three workers globally living on under \$2 a day) (ILO 2013). The ILO calculates poverty levels using the World Bank's extremely conservative nominal poverty lines of \$1 and \$2 (purchasing power parity) a day. Many experts on poverty argue that the World Bank's poverty line is much too low, and they recommend that it be raised significantly, so that it is between four and 10 times higher (Edward 2006; Sumner 2016). At these levels, the majority of the world's population lives in poverty.
- 2 For the Chilean developmental experience under Pinochet, see Taylor (2006) and for South Korea's development experience under Park, see Chang (2002).
- 3 The term intermittent revolution is derived from Tugal (2016).
- 4 This section draws heavily from Lebowitz (2015: 183–84) and Harnecker (2014).
- 5 For report, see Henry (2012); Shaxson et al (2012); Boyce (2011).
- 6 http://www.carbontradewatch.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=227&Itemid=95.
- 7 For example, we will seek to work with movements such as Divest London (<http://divestlondon.org/>) to reorient divested finances into new, progressive activities.
- 8 These principles are adapted from those established by the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America. See ALBA-TCP (2010).

REFERENCES

- Akram-Lodhi, H (2015): "Accelerating towards Food Sovereignty," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 36, No 3, pp 563–83.
- ALBA-TCP (2010): Principles of the ALBA [Online] <http://www.alba-tcp.org/en/contenido/principios-alba>, accessed on 25/07/13.
- Areataios, Evangelos (2015): "The Rojava Revolution," *Open Democracy*, 15 March, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/arab-awakening/evangelos-areataios/rojava-revolution>.
- Bardhan, Pranab (2016): "Could a Basic Income Help Poor Countries?," Project Syndicate, 22 June, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/developing-country-basic-income-by-pranab-bardhan-2016-06>.
- Barker, C (1998): "Industrialism, Capitalism, Value, Force and States: Some Theoretical Remarks," Anglo-Bulgarian Comparative History Seminar, Wolverhampton University.
- Bourdieu, P (1984): *Distinction*, Abingdon: Routledge.
- Boyce, James K and Léonce Ndikumana (2011): "African Debt: Funny Money and Stolen Lives," 28 September, <http://africanarguments.org/2011/09/28/african-debt-funny-money-and-stolen-lives-by-james-k-boyce-and-leonce-ndikumana/>.
- Chang, D O (2002): "Korean Labour Relations in Transition: Authoritarian Flexibility," *Labour, Capital and Society*, Vol 35, No 1, pp 10–40.
- Clark, B and J B Foster (2009): "Ecological Imperialism and the Global Metabolic Rift Unequal Exchange and the Guano/Nitrates Trade," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, Vol 50, Nos 3–4, pp 311–34.
- Crotty, J and G Epstein (1996): "In Defence of Capital Controls," *Socialist Register*, Vol 18, No 32.
- Edward, P (2006): "The Ethical Poverty Line: A Moral Quantification of Absolute Poverty," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 27, No 2, pp 377–93.
- Elson, D (1988): "Market Socialism or Socialization of the Market?," *New Left Review*, Vol 172, No 3.
- Freire, P (1972): *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York: Penguin.
- Geras, N (1999): "Minimum Utopia: Ten Theses," *Socialist Register*, Vol 36, No 36, pp 41–52.
- Gowan, P (1999): *The Global Gamble: Washington's Faustian Bid for World Dominance*, London: Verso.
- Harnecker, M (2014): "Decentralised Participatory Planning Based on Experiences of Brazil, Venezuela and the State of Kerala, India," <http://links.org.au/node/4208>, accessed on 17 August 2016.
- Henry, James S (2012): "The Price of Offshore Revisited: New Estimates for 'Missing' Global Private Wealth, Income, Inequality, and Lost Taxes," Tax Justice Network, July, http://www.taxjustice.net/cms/upload/pdf/Price_of_Offshore_Revisited_26072012.pdf.
- Hoy, C and A Sumner (2016): "Global Poverty and Inequality: Is There New Capacity for Redistribution in Developing Countries?" *Journal of Globalization and Development*, Vol 7, No 1, pp 117–57.
- Hulme, D J Hanlon and A Barrientos (2012): *Just Give Money to the Poor: The Development Revolution From the Global South*, Kumarian Press.
- ILO (2013): "Global Wage Report 2012–13," International Labour Organization, Geneva.
- Kloppenburger, J (2010): "Impeding Dispossession, Enabling Repossession: Biological Open Source and the Recovery of Seed Sovereignty," *Journal of Agrarian Change*, Vol 10, No 3, pp 367–88.
- Lebowitz, M (2015): *The Socialist Imperative: From Gotha to Now*, New York: NYU Press.
- Mamani, Fernando H (2010): *Vivir Bien/Buen Vivir*, Lima, Peru.
- Martinez-Alier, J (2003): "The Environmentalism of the Poor: A Study of Ecological Conflicts And Valuation," Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Marx, K (1966): *The Civil War in France*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, first edition 1966, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1871/civil-war-france/drafts/index.htm>, accessed on September 2016.
- (1993): *Grundrisse*, London: Penguin.
- McMichael, P (ed) (1994): *The Global Restructuring of Agro-food Systems*, Cornell University Press.
- Mellor, M (2005): "The Politics of Money and Credit as a Route to Ecological Sustainability and Economic Democracy," *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, Vol 16, No 2, pp 45–60.
- Mellor, M (2012): "Money as a Public Resource for Development," *Development*, Vol 55, No 1, pp 45–53.
- Ndikumana, L and J Boyce (2011): *Africa's Odious Debts: How Foreign Loans and Capital Flight Bled A Continent*, London: Zed Books.
- Oxfam (2017): "An Economy for the 99%: It's Time to Build a Human Economy that Benefits Everyone, Not Just the Privileged Few," <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/economy-99>, accessed on July 2017.
- Rogers, D and B Balázs (2016): "The View from Deprivation: Poverty, Inequality and the Distribution of Wealth," *Poverty and the Millennium Development Goals*, A Cimadamore, G Koehler and T Pogge (eds), Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- SAHO (2011): "The Freedom Charter Campaign," South African History Online, <http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/freedom-charter>.
- Selwyn, B (2014): *The Global Development Crisis*, Cambridge: Polity.
- (2017): *The Struggle for Development*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Shaxson, Nicholas, John Christensen and Nick Mathiasen (2012): "Inequality: You Don't Know the Half of It (Or Why Inequality Is Worse Than We Thought)," Tax Justice Network, 19 July, http://www.taxjustice.net/cms/upload/pdf/Inequality_120722_You_dont_know_the_half_of_it.pdf.
- Standing, G (2017): *Basic Income: And How We Can Make It Happen*, London: Pelican.
- Sumner, A (2016): *Global Poverty: Deprivation, Distribution and Development*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Taylor, M (2006): *From Pinochet to the 'Third Way': Neoliberalism and Social Transformation in Chile*, London: Pluto.
- Trainer, T (1996): *Towards a Sustainable Economy*, Oxford: John Carpenter Publishing.
- Tugal, C (2016): *The Fall of the Turkish Model: How the Arab Uprisings Brought, Down Islamic Liberalism*, London: Verso.
- Weis, T (2010): "The Accelerating Biophysical Contradictions of Industrial Capitalist Agriculture," *Journal of Agrarian Change*, Vol 10, No 3, pp 315–41.

engage

Through EPW Engage, our new digital initiative, we seek to explore new and exciting possibilities of communicating research in a creative and accessible manner to a wider audience.

www.epw.in/engage